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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 002796

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MAYSAN FADILAH HEAD: WE'RE 100 PERCENT IRAQI

REF: BAGHDAD 2473

Classified By: PRT Team Leader Dan Foote for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

(U) This is a PRT Maysan reporting cable.

¶1. (C/REL MCFI) Summary: Ali Kadhem Khalaf, the leader of Fadilah in Maysan and a deputy Provincial Council (PC) chairman, presented his party as nationalistic, anti-extremist, anti-militia, and free of foreign influence in an August 30 meeting with PRT leader. He provided additional color on the makeup of the PC, echoed consistent calls for more USG-funded projects in the province, and asked for increased coordination with the provincial government and Directors General (DGs) on any future assistance. End Summary.

100 percent nationalist  
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¶2. (C/REL MCFI) Ali Khadem described Fadilah in Maysan as a group of highly educated individuals who understand the province and are committed to its development within a strong, federal Iraq. Portraying his party as a leader in working to marginalize religious fundamentalists and extremists, he repeatedly stated that Fadilah is "100 percent" Iraqi-directed and funded, claiming there is no foreign influence or agenda. He emphasized that "weapons belong only in the hands of the government," adding that the party does not support militias in any way. He described Fadilah's involvement in The Powers of July 22 Bloc (reftel) as a means to support Kirkuk's independence from Kurdish control and part of a broader effort to foster freedom from non-nationalist forces and marginalize extremists across the country.

Overview of PC  
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¶3. (C/REL MCFI) Ali Kadhem introduced himself as one of two PC deputies and the deputy chairman for Technical Affairs (which oversees subcommittees on reconstruction and energy, among others). According to Ali, the other PC deputy is also the chairman for Management Affairs, Abdul Hasan Dagar, a former Da'wa member who recently shifted to the National Reform Trend led by Ibrahim al-Jaafari. In an aside, he related that two Da'wa factions exist within Maysan; one run by Iraqis with national interests at heart, and one controlled by the "outside" (implying Iran). Ali explained that, in addition to the Sadrists, ISCI/Badr, Da'wa, and Fadilah, the other entity holding multiple PC seats (3) was the "NGO-affiliated" al-Ridha Center, a "non-political" organization associated with Ayatollah al-Sistani. He skirted the question of whether PC Chairman and avowed Sadrist Abdul Jabar Wahid was likely to agree to meet with the PRT, responding half-heartedly that he would try to arrange a meeting. When asked if the PC might consider meeting with the PRT as a group, he replied, "Not now, but perhaps in the future."

Need for infrastructure projects

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¶4. (C/REL MCFI) Repeating a recurring theme from previous engagements with PC members, Ali Kadhem relayed institutional frustration at the slow implementation of large, long-awaited USG PRDC-approved projects. As provincial priorities, he cited the completion of sewage projects, fixing Amarah's main thoroughfares before winter, and rural development focused on water, electricity, and roads. Comparing Maysan's level of development with other provinces, he said, "Other provinces started reconstruction from 20 percent; we are starting from below zero." While praising the USG-funded electrical-generating station, new highway, and surgical hospital, he appealed to the PRT to carefully coordinate prospective new projects closely with the provincial government and respective DGS, cautioning that otherwise, "the projects won't properly serve their purpose or be correctly maintained."

Comment  
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¶5. (C/REL MCFI) Despite Ali Kadhem's positive portrayal, Fadilah is the least popular of the major Shi'a parties and unlikely to perform well in provincial elections. His view that the U.S. should continue to fund large infrastructure projects is widely shared by other PC members. The PC's reluctance to meet as a group with the PRT reflects the continuing challenge facing the PRT's engagement efforts.  
End comment.  
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